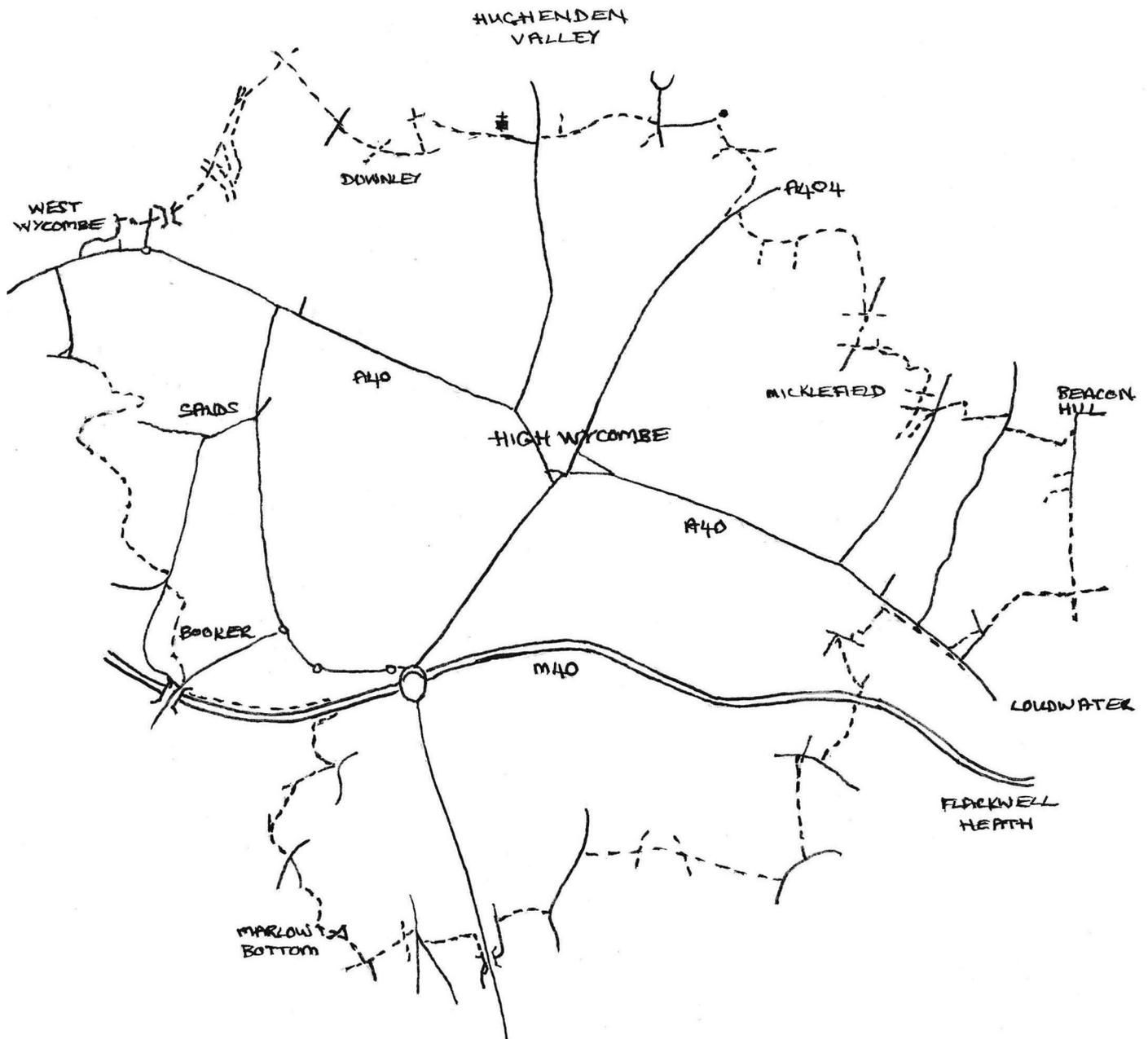


THE ROUND WYCOMBE WALK

Registered Charity
No: 1075175

The Round Wycombe Walk is a circular walk of around 20 miles devised by Wycombe Wildlife Group to incorporate some of the best publicly-accessible green spaces around the town of High Wycombe, and promote the associated wildlife and heritage.



Introduction

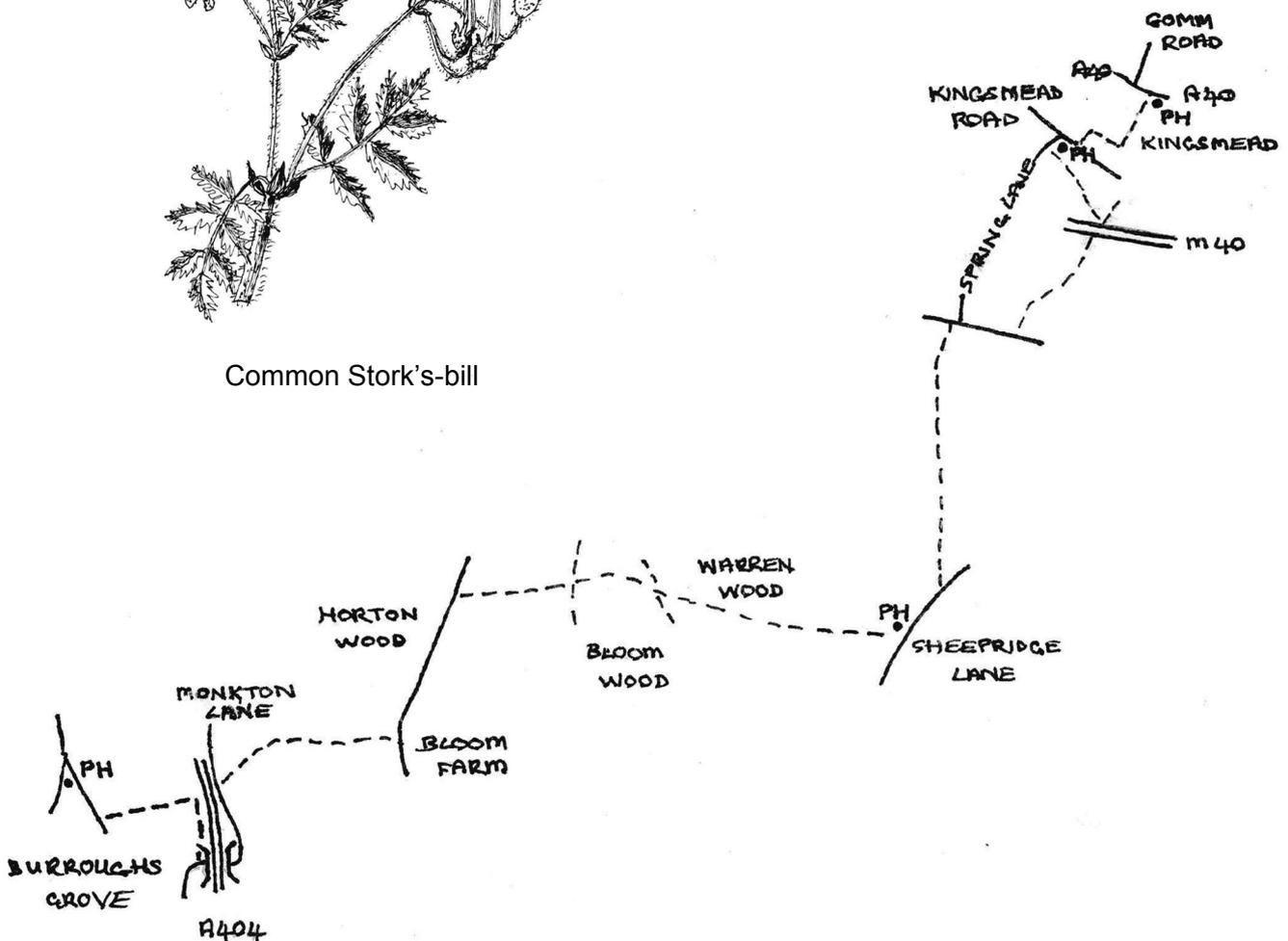
In planning the Walk, it has been assumed that most walkers will not wish to cover the total distance in a single walk, so it has been divided into 4 stages. The start and end of each of these stages have bus links with the town centre, and reference has been made to these and other bus connections which can be used to shorten walks or facilitate walks around areas of interest adjacent to the route of the Walk.

When the Walk was first planned, it had been agreed that Gomm Valley would be developed. Whilst some of the detail has still to be agreed, it is intended to create rights of way through the valley which, when established, will enable the Walk to pass through it to finish at Gomm Road. Although people do walk through Gomm Valley, we cannot condone this action until rights of way are established, so we have included an alternative route in Stage 4. This route crosses Hammersley Lane and follows rights of way through Beacon Hill, past Pond Wood and, on reaching Sniggs Wood, follows the route of the Chiltern Way through Wycombe Heights Golf Centre. It then crosses the A40 at the Rayners Avenue junction and follows the Wye chalk stream through Kingsmead to the bridge next to the George V PH in London Road where Stage 1 of The Round Wycombe Walk starts.

To take account of the extra distance of the revised Stage 4 of the Walk, Stage 3 has been split into two stages (3A and 3B) to enable walkers to finish the walk from West Wycombe at either Hughenden or Terriers.



Common Stork's-bill



The start of Stage 1 of the Walk is the junction of Gomm Road and London Road (A40) The nearby bus stop provides an easy connection from the town centre.

Cross the A40 and the footbridge over the Wye chalk stream by the George V PH to enter Kingsmead. It is well worth walking around the perimeter of this large public open space to view both the main stream on the north-east side, and the Back Stream on the south-west side which flows from the foot of the Rye Dyke nearer to the town centre to where it joins the main stream in Boundary Park, Loudwater.

There are public toilets alongside the tennis courts on the north-west side of Kingsmead.

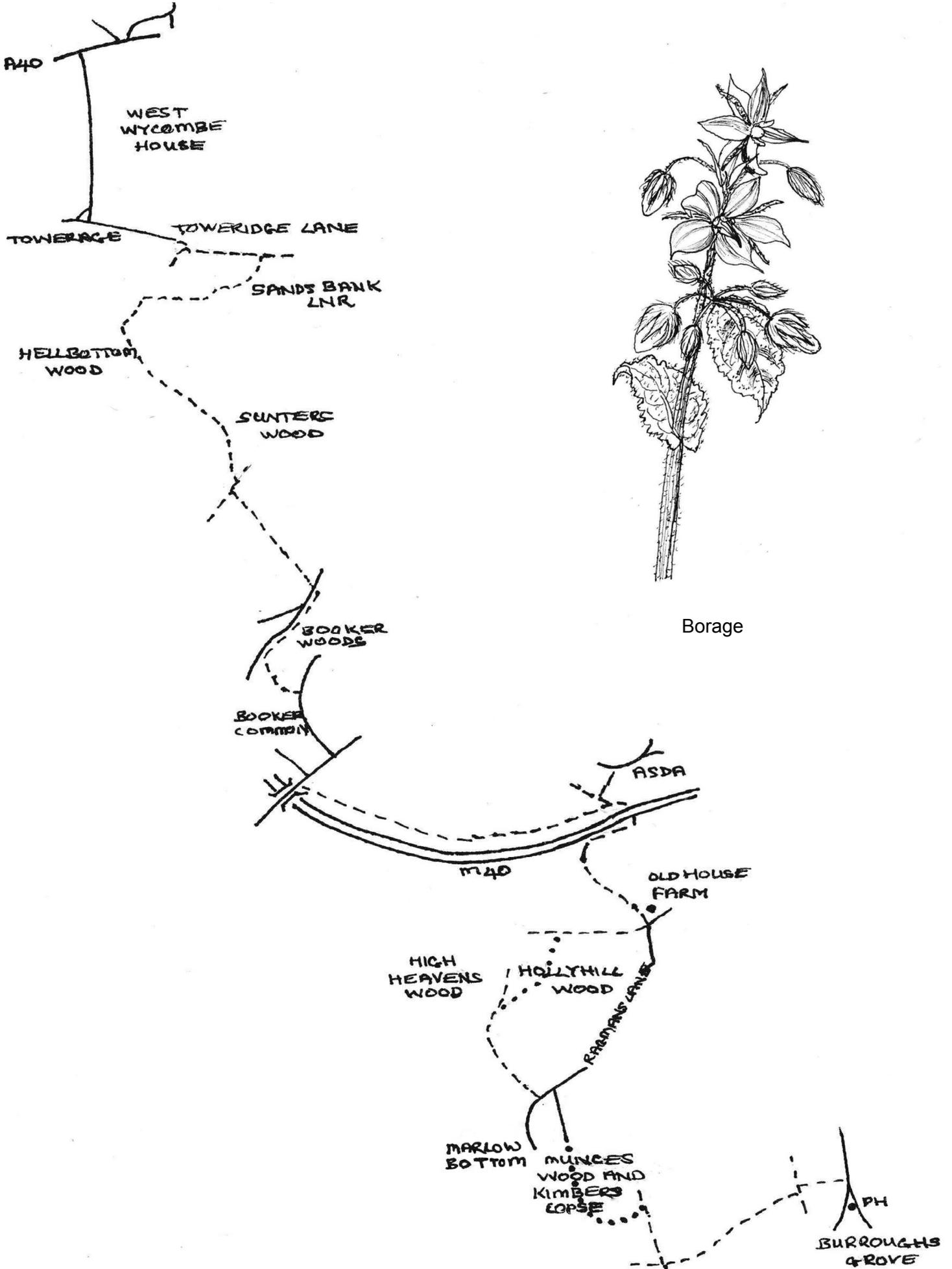
To continue The Round Wycombe Walk keep to the north-west side of Kingsmead, cross a footbridge over the Back Stream and follow the path which will take you to Kingsmead Road. Turn right along the road and take the left turn into Spring Lane next to the General Havelock PH. Take the footpath on the left immediately after the PH and follow the path up the hill, looking down on Cobbles Farm on your right. When you reach the metal gate leading into Fennell's Wood, stop and admire the views of the whole of Gomm Valley and of Wycombe Heights, the highest land on the east side of High Wycombe. After passing through the gate, turn left and join the Chiltern Way which our Walk follows for the remainder of Stage 1.



The whole of Gomm Valley can be seen from the top of the path before it enters Fennell's Wood

Fennell's Wood was cut in two when the M40 was built, but a pedestrian foot tunnel was provided to retain the existing public right of way. After passing through this unlit tunnel, turn right and follow Chiltern Way signs through Oak Wood to reach Heath End Road. Turn right and cross the top of Spring Lane which the Walk followed briefly by the General Havelock PH. Cross Heath End Road and take the footpath signed as the Chiltern Way which turns off to the left a short distance past the Spring Lane junction. Follow the footpath downhill until you reach Sheepridge Lane. Turn right and walk along the road verge until you reach the Crooked Billet PH. Take the footpath to the right and follow the Chiltern Way signs which take you into and through Warren Wood where you will pass an ancient earthwork (which you might have walked by without even noticing it, if the interpretation board had not been provided). When you reach Winchbottom Lane turn left and follow the lane until you reach Bloom Farm. A path to the right just past the farm will lead you through Horton Wood to Monkton Lane. Do not attempt to follow the right of way which continues across the A404 dual carriageway at this point but turn left instead and follow Monkton Lane until it has taken you safely under the A404. A footpath on the right will then take you back along the west side of the A404. After passing Wood Barn Farm on your left, turn left as you rejoin the original public footpath which runs in a straight line across the dual carriageway. Follow this path until you reach Pump Lane North where you need to turn right and follow the road until you reach the junction with Marlow Road at Burroughs Grove with the Three Horseshoes PH on your left. The bus stop for the 800/ 850 bus service to High Wycombe is on the opposite side of the main road. Cross with care and make sure the bus driver sees you, as not many people use this stop.

STAGE 2 - BURROUGHS GROVE TO WEST WYCOMBE



Borage

This stage of The Round Wycombe Walk starts on the west side of Marlow Road opposite Pump Lane North, initially continuing to follow the route of the Chiltern Way. If coming from High Wycombe on the 800/850 bus service alight at the Three Horseshoes bus stop, making sure that the driver has heard the bell, as it is a long uphill walk back if the bus takes you past your stop.

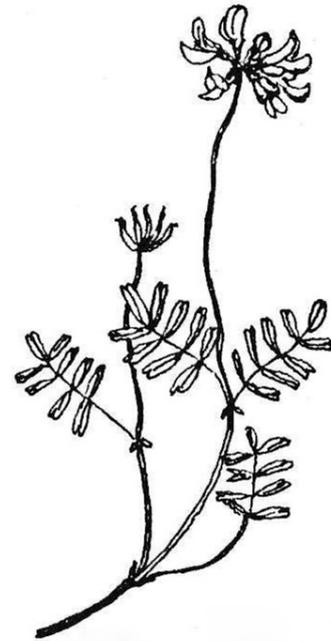


Three Horseshoes PH

The Walk starts by crossing an arable field and then descends down some steps where it meets a bridleway. Turn left here and then immediately right and follow this track until you reach a few houses at the northern end of Hill Farm Road. Here our Walk leaves the Chiltern Way and turns right to follow a bridleway. On reaching the signed entrance to the Woodland Trust's Munces Wood and Kimber's Copse on the left, our Walk leaves public rights of way for a while to enjoy what this interesting site has to offer. This is a relatively new nature reserve which has added an area of predominately chalk grassland with scrub and newly planted trees named Kimber's Copse, to an area of ancient woodland named Munces Wood. By walking along the southern boundary of the reserve you can, on a clear day, enjoy some extensive views southwards over the Thames Valley and beyond, including a view of Windsor Castle some 11 miles away. When the mature woodland of Munces Wood is reached, follow the path round to the right and, unless you wish to explore some of the ancient woodland with its old Yew trees, it is best to remain on the level path until you reach the far end of the wood where you can exit into residential roads which will take you to the north end of Marlow Bottom near where Ragmans Lane and the road through Marlow Bottom join. A bridleway leading north from this point follows the valley with High Heavens Wood on the left. When you reach Hollyhill Wood on your right, take the path which leads into the wood and goes uphill near its southern edge and then along its level eastern edge. You will then discover this wood's hidden secret - a number of Buddhist shrines called stupas, which were created and placed in the wood by the former owner of the wood. Visitors are welcome to visit this site and some seats have been provided for those who wish to rest and contemplate in this quiet and unusual place. Exit the wood passing under the archway and turn right following the path until you reach Old House Farm on a bend of Ragman's Lane. Turn left here and follow the bridleway which leads to a tunnel under the M40 which takes you to a bridleway which passes the rear of an Asda store and a John Lewis store at Cressex and continues as a noisy but attractive walk alongside the motorway as far as Cressex Road. Turn right to join Cressex Road and take the second road to the left (Limmer Lane) which will take you to Booker Common and Woods.

If you wish to finish your walk at either Cressex or Booker, bus route 32 provides a frequent service to the town centre and on to Micklefield from a bus stop outside the Asda store (which can be accessed by 3 right turns after passing through the tunnel under the M40) or from a bus stop in Cressex Road after the Holmers Farm Way junction.

The Round Wycombe Walk from Booker Common follows the eastern edge of the Common and the boundary of the woodland and take one of several footpaths leading downhill through the woodland to Horns Lane. Turn right and follow the path near the woodland edge until you pass the Lane End Road junction. Continue to walk along the woodland edge until you see a footpath entering the wood on the opposite side of Lane End Road. Cross the road at this point and follow the path opposite uphill until it is signed off to the right. Continue to follow the white arrows on the trees to guide you through Sunters Wood until it emerges into arable fields facing Hellbottom Wood. Follow the footpath across the field and then turn right following the public footpath which leads up the hill and veers to the right to reach Sands Bank Local Nature Reserve. This chalk grassland and the adjoining Sands Wood are well worth exploring, and there is a bench at the highest point of the site where you can take a well-earned break.



Horseshoe Vetch

To continue The Round Wycombe Walk turn left by the bench to join Toweridge Lane, a footpath linking Upper Sands to Towerage. Turn left to join this path which widens into an unsurfaced road when it reaches the houses at Towerage. When you reach a statue of a horse on the right of the track you can obtain a view of West Wycombe House through the gap in the trees that was almost certainly created so that the statue is visible from the house. Continue along Toweridge Lane which turns right when you arrive at a T junction and provides a surfaced road going downhill to join the A40. Where the woodland ends, extensive views of West Wycombe Hill, Chorley Road and the valleys either side of Bledlow Ridge can be enjoyed, and views of West Wycombe House and Park can be seen on the right.

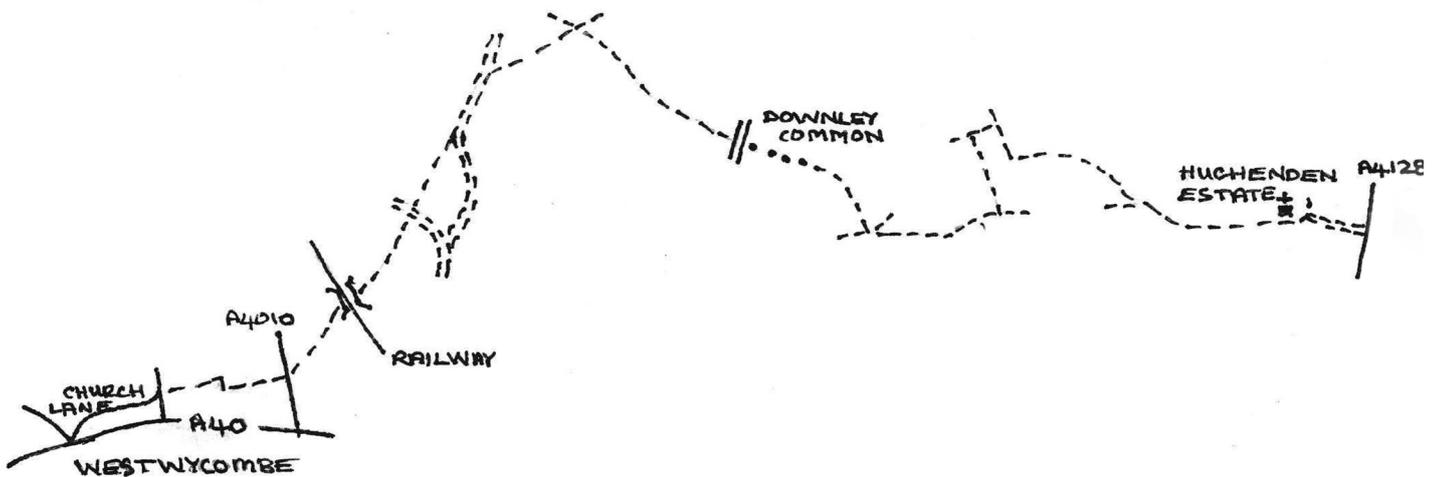
Turn right on reaching the A40 and walk into West Wycombe village passing the entrance to West Wycombe House on the right. There are public toilets in the private car park on the right of Church Lane, the road which turns left opposite the gates to West Wycombe Park. You can catch a bus (route 40) to High Wycombe from the bus stop in the High Street and, if you just miss one, a short walk to West Wycombe Road just beyond the Pedestal roundabout adds the 130 bus service to the list of options (except on Sundays).

Do find the time to explore the village if you have not done so. It is owned by the National Trust which preserves the buildings but cannot do anything to overcome the traffic problems which have a severe impact on the village. With West Wycombe Hill on one side of the village and West Wycombe estate on the other side, there is no acceptable opportunity for the A40 to by-pass the village.

A visit to West Wycombe House and its grounds is worthwhile but, if planning to do so, check its opening dates and times on the National Trust website to avoid disappointment. The 18th century landscaping of the Park made full use of the Wye chalk stream to create a large lake and numerous water channels and there are a number of temples to see. Although it is not accessible to the public, the former water driven sawmill can be seen from the cascade at the eastern side of the lake.

West Wycombe Hill has not been included in the Round Wycombe Walk but a walk up the hill and through some of the woodland on the sides of the hill and further along the ridge is worth the climb. The church of St Lawrence is worth a visit to see the ceiling painting of the Last Supper and to visit the tower, if it is open, to enjoy the far reaching views. The vertical iron ladder which gave entry to the Golden Ball on top of the church tower was removed many years ago.

STAGE 3A - WEST WYCOMBE TO HUGHENDEN



This stage of the Round Wycombe Walk starts from West Wycombe village which is served by bus route 40 from High Wycombe. Bus 130 turns off at the Pedestal roundabout but it is only a short walk into the village from there.

At the west end of the village the Walk follows Church Lane, the road which leads round the bottom of the hill passing a private car park on the right where there are public toilets. After passing the village school, the road goes past the entrance to the Hell Fire Caves. This well-lit tourist attraction with its animated sound and vision displays is not as exciting to visit as it was many years ago when visitors were given a candle and matches to light their way through the chalky passageways and find their way back out. It was a regular practice for boys to blow out other visitors' candles.

Follow the road when it veers to the left but, if you have not already explored the village, a detour down the road to the right reveals some of the most interesting features of the village with its old cottages, an old furniture factory and, at the far end, the oldest building in the village with an arch leading into the High Street. This building which originally had a cross on the front wall was a stopping place for pilgrims on their way to Canterbury.

Shortly after Church Lane veers to left after passing the Hell Fire Caves, take the footpath which leads off to the right and follow this path downhill, making sure you go through the gate halfway down the hill. The path follows the field boundary and exits onto the verge of the A4010 next to Flinthall Farm. Very rarely, in years when there has been excessive autumn and winter rainfall, the chalk aquifers higher up the valley can cause a tributary of the Wye chalk stream to flow along the roadside ditches and flood the fields on both sides of the road near Flinthall Farm. In 2014 this tributary had a continuous flow from Saunderton to West Wycombe, the water flooding across the A40 and disappearing into the grounds of West Wycombe Park where it joined the other watercourses within the estate.

After crossing the road by Flinthall Farm follow the signed footpath which climbs gradually uphill, passing under the railway line and then crossing a number of fields and some areas of scrub in a more or less straight line towards Cookshall Farm. It is worth looking back at intervals to enjoy the views of West Wycombe Church and the Dashwood Family mausoleum. There is one field which is often ploughed and difficult to walk across in or after wet weather. There is a farm building on the horizon next to where the public footpath exits from that field and this should help to ensure you remain on the footpath which tends not to be reinstated after ploughing takes place. Instead of crossing this field, you might find it easier to follow the track to the right and then turn left when you reach Cookshall Lane.



West Wycombe Hill from Cookshall Lane

When you reach a wood where the lane veers to the left, take the footpath which leads into the wood and passes through a wide clearing until it reaches a junction of 4 footpaths. Turn right here and follow the path uphill and then alongside a hedgerow on the left enjoying the extensive views to the right. Continue along this path until you reach Downley Common.

There are a number of convenient benches on the Common near where you leave the footpath, making it a good place to take a break and enjoy a packed lunch. The village of Downley is only a short walk to the right and a regular bus service (route 30) provides a frequent link to High Wycombe town centre.

To continue the Walk to Hughenden from the benches on Downley Common, look straight ahead and you will see a red dog poo bin. This provides a very helpful navigation aid, unless someone decides to relocate it, and if you walk towards it and keep walking in a straight line as you pass it, you will find you are following a track leading into and downhill through woodland which is part of the National Trust's Hughenden estate.

When you reach the end of the valley bottom, follow the well used path along the valley floor and out of the woodland. Although this track will take you to Hughenden Manor, it is far more interesting to go though the metal gate that you come to on the left which takes you across a field and into an area of scrub. Turn right and follow the footpath up a slope and, on reaching a crossing path, turn right. Follow the path which when it veers left is south-facing and, at the relevant times of the year, hosts numerous wildflower and insect species, including butterflies.



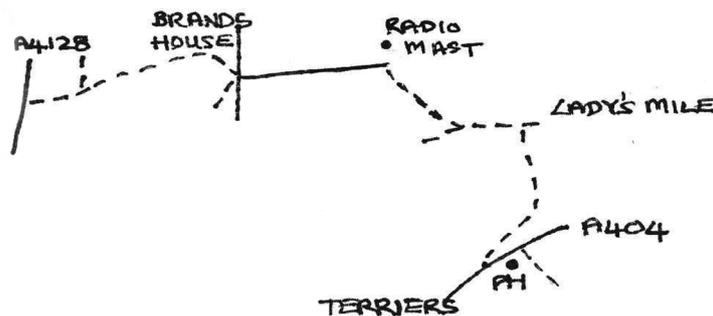
Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell butterflies

On reaching Hughenden Manor, take the path which leads past the stable block (with its café and toilets) and the walled garden on your left and the entrance to the house and gardens on your right, and walk down towards the church house and the church. Both of these buildings are interesting and the church is worth a visit. The ornate Disraeli Family vault can be seen in the churchyard.

From the church, walk downhill towards the exit road from the Hughenden estate onto Hughenden Road. Just before you leave the estate you will cross the Hughenden Stream which is a tributary of the Wye chalk stream. The Hughenden Stream is a winterbourne and whether or not it is flowing depends on the water levels within the chalk aquifers.

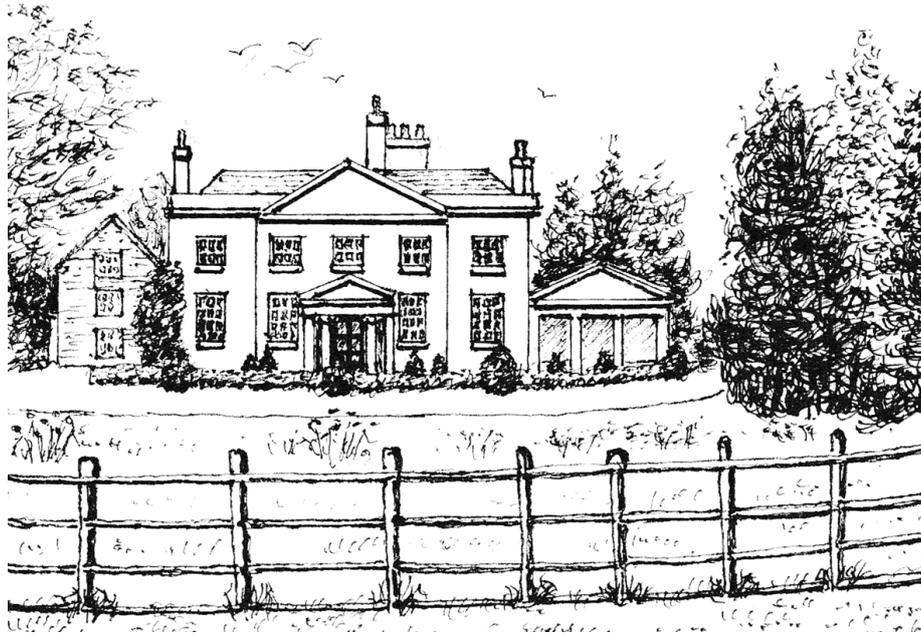
The stop for the 300 bus back to High Wycombe is slightly to the right as you leave the exit road from the Hughenden Estate and on the opposite side of the busy A4128. Cross with care, as this has been the site of several accidents.

STAGE 3B - HUGHENDEN TO TERRIERS



Irrespective of whether you are walking this section as a continuation of the section of the Walk from West Wycombe and finishing at Terriers or have decided to start the final stage of The Round Wycombe Walk from here, you will need to cross Valley Road slightly to the north of the exit from Hughenden Church and Manor. There is a regular bus service (Route 300) from the town centre to this location.

After crossing this busy road with care, take the rough fairly steep path called Church Lane which is slightly to the north of the exit road from Hughenden Church and Manor. You will soon reach a woodland on the right of the path: this is a BBOWT nature reserve called Millfield Wood which is well worth a visit to see Herb Paris and, if you are lucky, Lily of the Valley.



Brands House

On reaching Kingshill Road, cross the road and follow a straight concrete private road which leads to the local police radio transmitter. (Ignore any signs which might give the impression that you are not allowed to walk along this road, as it is a public footpath.) At the end of the road the public footpath turns right and leads to a wide fairly overgrown bridleway known as Lady's Mile. Turn left, keeping to the right side of this wide track so that you do not miss the footpath which soon turns off to the right. An interesting plant called Pink Purslane (*Claytonia siberica*) has survived here for many years despite its vulnerable location next to a narrow footpath entrance: although it is common in many parts of the country it is a rarity in our area so please be careful not to tread on it.



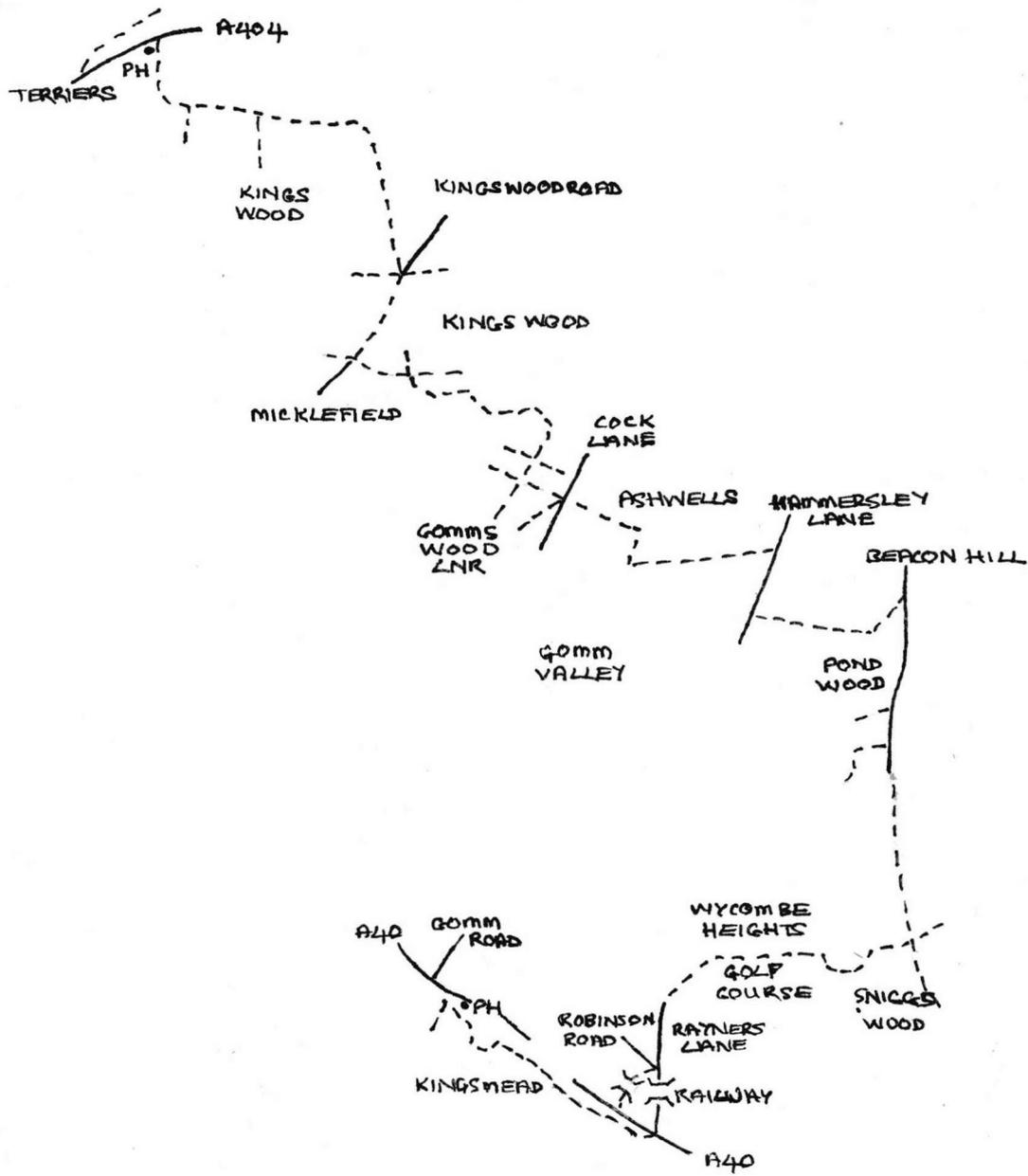
Pink Purslane

Having taken this footpath to the right, we pass through Terriers Farm, a site which is being developed for housing, and emerge onto a green open space alongside the A404 opposite the Beech Tree PH.

If continuing The Round Wycombe Walk, cross the road where it is safe to do so and take the footpath on the left side of the PH which leads into Kings Wood.

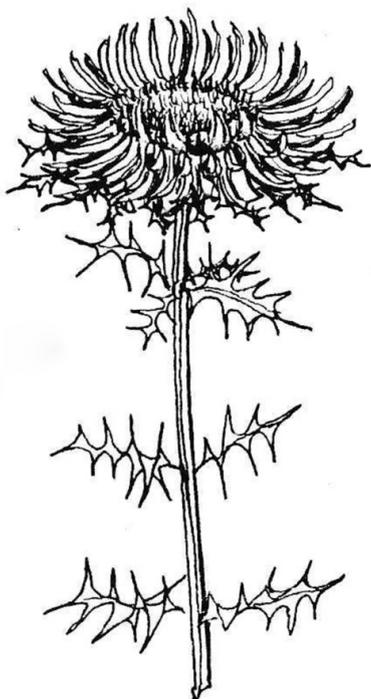
If finishing the walk here, a short walk past the roundabout will take you to a bus stop from which there are frequent buses into High Wycombe.

STAGE 4 - TERRIERS TO GOMM ROAD



Kings Wood is a very large wood, covering 186 acres, and its numerous paths make it very easy to lose your way so, unless you know the wood well, a map of the wood and a compass could prove helpful if diverting off the Round Wycombe Walk route to enjoy more of this interesting wood. A separate walk around this wood is recommended and, for this purpose, bus route 39 provides a frequent service between the town centre and Totteridge from where there is easy access to the wood.

If walking through Kings Wood just for the purpose of following The Round Wycombe Walk, it is recommended that you stay on the path from the Beech Tree PH and follow the woodland edge along the valley floor until the car park at the foot of Kingswood Road is reached. Turn right here and keep to the wide path which follows the valley floor, ignoring paths which lead uphill. When you reach the end of the wood, there is an exit into Woodside Road, Micklefield (from where there is a frequent bus service (Route 32) to High Wycombe town centre). To continue the Walk turn left up a steep path. Where the path levels off you will reach a crossing path immediately after passing a group of mature beech trees on the right. Take the path to the right which crosses a slight ditch and leads downhill, veering to the left to follow the inside edge of the wood with a holly thicket on your right. Just before the path starts to go uphill, take a right fork which will take you to the edge of the wood where you will be able to join the path which runs along the outside of the wood by descending a gentle slope, taking care when the soil is wet. Turn left and follow the path running along the outside of the wood, passing an old boundary bank on the left and open chalk grassland which supports an interesting range of calcareous plant species on the right. This grassland is part of Gomm's Wood LNR, a large reserve covering much of the east side of the Micklefield Valley. A conveniently sited bench provides a good resting place while you admire the views of Micklefield's nature reserves and woodlands, all of which are well worth a visit.



Carline Thistle



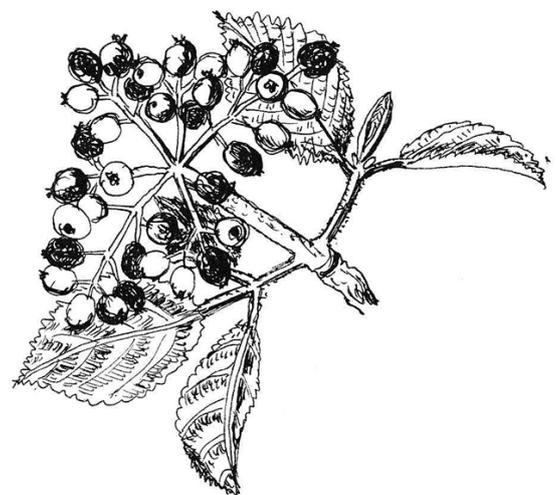
Pyramidal Orchid

Ignore paths leading to the right and follow the signed permissive path where it veers left and then right at a point where four paths meet. As the permissive path starts to go uphill, it veers to the right passing a coppiced area on the right and more mature woodland on rising land on the left. You will soon reach a point where there is a short flight of steps to the left and a path to the right. Ignore these and continue until you reach a second flight of steps to the left and a path to the right. Turn left here and climb the long flight of steps which will take you up the edge of Kingswood Cemetery, the lower part of which is an area of chalk grassland designated for future cemetery use. Where the steps end, continue up the path until you reach the top of the cemetery where a right turn followed by an immediate left turn, after passing a Gomm's Wood Local Nature Reserve sign, will take you out into Cock Lane, a narrow single track road. Cross this road and take the footpath which leads up the opposite bank and continues along a public right of way at the edge of an arable field. The path then crosses Ashwells, an area of Council-owned grassland due to be developed, which is accessed through a metal gate. Keeping to the right and passing through another metal gate takes you to a public footpath which will enable you to get to Hammersley Lane.

Along with Ashwells, Gomm Valley is due to be developed. The existing SSSI, areas of ancient woodland, old hedgerows and other biologically important areas will be preserved and additional chalk grassland and hedgerows are planned, together with rights of way through the valley. This may then become the final leg of The Round Wycombe Walk leading to Gomm Road where Stage 1 of the Walk starts, or it may be included as a recommended separate walk.



Spindle



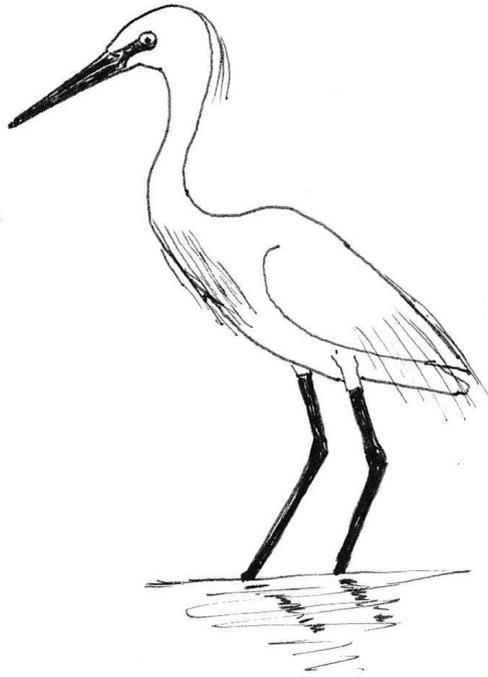
Wayfaring-tree

Although people do walk through Gomm Valley, they have no right to do so at present, so we have included an alternative route for completing The Round Wycombe Walk pending the creation of rights of way through the valley. We did consider the use of Hammersley Lane as far as the public footpath which leads to the right from the top of the Gomm Valley SSSI to the top of Gomm Road just north of the railway bridge, but decided against recommending it as a temporary route as it involves walking along a fairly busy road. The alternative route we recommend is as follows:

After leaving Ashwells, the footpath passes through a holly thicket and then turns left alongside some very large gardens and mature trees on the left hand side of the path to join Hammersley Lane. Turn right and walk along the tarmac road verge to where it is safe to cross the road and take the private road on the opposite side along which a public footpath is signed. Where the private road veers right, follow the public footpath straight ahead until you reach the road at Beacon Hill. Turn right and follow the road until you reach the end of the housing area and pass by Pond Wood (which does contain a pond). Shortly after this, where a bridleway veers off to the right, the road continues as a footpath. Follow this footpath until you reach Sniggs Wood where the Chiltern Way crosses, and a right turn will take you into Wycombe Heights Golf Centre. The rights of way through the Golf Centre are clearly marked, providing a safe route to avoid bunkers, grass mowing machinery and flying white objects. A number of signs referring to tees may make you feel thirsty, but a golf course is not a suitable place to take a rest, so we continue downhill and follow the road which takes us out of the Golf Centre. When you reach Robinson Road leading off to the right, cross this road and follow the marked footpath, which leads through a small area of woodland and a foot tunnel under the railway, and walk down a path leading to the A40 London Road. Turn left, cross Rayners Avenue, and then London Road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing. From here a bridge over the Wye and a footpath will take you past the entrance to a business park and into Kingsmead. Walk upstream until you reach the footbridge next to the George V PH opposite Gomm Road, the starting point of Stage 1 of The Round Wycombe Walk. There are frequent bus services from here to take you back to High Wycombe town centre.



Blackbird on Bramble



Little Egret

We hope you enjoyed reading this guide to The Round Wycombe Walk and found the information provided both interesting and useful.

If you have any comments or suggestions, these can be sent to Wycombe Wildlife Group via the Contact Form on our website www.wycombewildlife.org.uk .

We would also be interested to receive comments from those who undertake some or all of the walk and information, including location data, on fauna and flora seen along the route or within adjacent woods and open spaces to which the public have access.

Designed and produced by Roger Wilding

Illustrations by Frances Wilding